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NEW PROGRAMS AND TRENDS IN GUIDANCE FOR SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED YOUTH.

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THE BUREAU OF GUIDANCE OF THE NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT INITIATES DEMONSTRATION GUIDANCE PROJECTS FOR DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS WHICH ARE CONDUCTED THROUGHOUT THE STATE. PROPOSALS FOR THESE PROJECTS ARE SUBMITTED BY THE LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS BECAUSE GUIDANCE AND EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS CONDUCTED AT THIS LEVEL ARE MOST PROMISING. PROJECT ABLE SUPPORTS COMPENSATORY EDUCATION PROGRAMS ON VARIOUS GRADE LEVELS FOR TALENTED BUT DEPRIVED STUDENTS. TALENT SEARCH IS SIMILAR TO PROJECT ABLE EXCEPT THAT IT INVOLVES ONLY DISADVANTAGED SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS AND OFFERS THEM ONLY ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE SERVICES. STEP (SCHOOL TO EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM), WORK-STUDY PROGRAM, WAS ESTABLISHED FOR POTENTIAL DROPOUTS. THE NOW-COMPLETED HOLDING POWER PROJECT TRIED TO DISCOVER HOW SPECIFIC GUIDANCE SERVICES CAN REDUCE THE DROPOUT RATE, AND FOUND THAT EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL DROPOUTS AND CLOSE COORDINATION OF STAFF EFFORTS INCREASE SCHOOL HOLDING POWER. THE TOTAL ATTITUDE AND EFFORTS OF COUNSELORS, INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF, FELLOW STUDENTS, AND ESPECIALLY PARENTS INFLUENCED A POTENTIAL DROPOUT'S DECISION TO STAY IN SCHOOL. IN GENERAL, AS CULTURAL MEDIATOR THE SLUM SCHOOL COUNSELOR MUST, UNLIKE HIS SUBURBAN COUNTERPART, REACH OUT TO COMMUNICATE WITH STUDENTS AND PARENTS TO MAKE THEM SENSITIVE TO COURSES OF ACTION WHICH WILL LEAD THEM AWAY FROM SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BOUNDARIES IMPOSED BY THE GHETTO. (LB)

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DR. GOLDIE RUTH KABACK, CHAIRMAN

Our next speaker, Mr. James Moore, comes to us from the State Education Department. He will present additional material of value to counselors.

NEW PROGRAMS AND TRENDS IN GUIDANCE FOR SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED YOUTH

MR. JAMES MOORE

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BUREAU OF GUIDANCE

NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

All of us who participate in conferences such as this listen with a certain amount of apprehension to what is presented by other participants to see if any substantial amount of our own prepared material has already been encovered. I think that you will note that some of the things I will say are reflections of remarks that were made this morning. Other points that I wish to make will be similar to those that Mr. Plaut has just pointed out. Actually, this similarity makes me feel good because I think all of us who work on different aspects of this problem are encouraged to find that others who we know to be leaders in the field have arrived at some of the same points of view or reached the same type of outlook.

The Bureau of Guidance, New York State Education Department, is charged with the responsibility for the improvement and expansion of guidance services in the schools of New York State. Perhaps the most common vehicle through which this objective is pursued is the program review in which Bureau supervisors make a thorough, on-the-site examination of local guidance programs and present recommendations for the attention of administrators and staff. However, from time to time, reacting to the recognition of similar and fundamental problems in many of the State's school districts, the Bureau has made special studies and established demonstration projects whose focus was more specifically upon counselee types

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than upon total programs.

A first concern, in accepting the invitation to speak to you today, was to determine if the clientele of our projects for the "culturally deprived" were in fact identical to those defined as "socially disadvantaged" in our host's PROJECT BEACON. Let me say at this point that although most of us can readily conjure a picture in the mind's eye of those we want to assist in these ventures, to reduce these images to a verbal description which can serve as the basis for a pratical selection standard is sometimes troublesome. We believe that PROJECT BEACON's definition of the socially disadvantaged closely approximates those developed in our projects and moreover, that is is a particularly succinct and accurate expression of the attributes of the pupils in whom we are interested. According to PROJECT BEACON, socially disadvantaged children are those "...who live in communities where:

- income level and status are low;
- general intellectual stimulation is inappropriate to a high level of academic achievement;
- and patterns of social organization, cultural characteristics and cultural values differ markedly from those which are dominant in our society."

The "society" which is referred to is that of our white, middle class.

I will outline our projects for you briefly and offer some generalizations based on our observations of their operation across the State.

Project ABLE

ABLE on the state level is a direct descendent of Higher Horizons in this city. It supports the development of programs for talented but deprived students. Presently it is established in 16 school districts, including three New York City high schools. The grade level and the educational specialties included vary from district to district. Only New York and Buffalo have programs at the senior

high school level. The majority encompass the elementary grades and not all provide guidance service as such. For the past two years, $200,000 has been made available to the Department by the Legislature which has been distributed to the schools on a matching basis. An appropriation of the same amount has been made for 1963-64.

Talent Search

Talent Search is similar in intent to ABLE. However, because the funds used in Talent Search are diverted from the Title V-A NDEA allotment managed by the Bureau, certain legal limitations are imposed. Those most pertinent require that only additional guidance services for talented but deprived students may be supported and that only secondary students may be included. In 1961-62, the Bureau made $25,000 available to 18 school districts for Talent Search projects. In the current year, approximately $47,000 has been reserved for projects in 27 school systems. Roughly the same amount will be encumbered in 1963-64. Some of the districts match the federal funds but not all. Matching is not required.

STEP

STEP (School to Employment Program) is a work-study program for potential school dropouts presently established in 10 communities, most of them rather large. Fifteen high schools in New York City have STEP units. Its purpose is to reduce the numberof unemployed school dropouts by encouraging the development of those habits, attitudes and skills necessary to success in the world of work, and in school. Our goal will be achieved if substantial numbers of students return to the normal school program and graduate, and if those who do leave school are assisted to make good beginnings in the labor market. The basic program framework includes a daily class session devoted to orientation to the

world of work plus supervised work experience, for three to four hours in the afternoon, both under the direction of the same teacher-coordinator. From the funds of local districts, stipends are paid to students employed in tax supported agencies. In private placements the employer pays the wage. The Legislature voted approximately $150,000 to underwrite the program this year. An equal sum has been appropriated for 1963-64. The Department supports local programs on a matching basis.

Obviously, a key person in STEP is the teacher-coordinator. In a number of cities, the coordinator is a trained counselor. In all cities, the coordinator's role is virtually indistinguishable from that of a counselor. Also, very close relations exist between the coordinators and the guidance staffs of STEP schools.

Holding Power Project

This project was actively pursued in 89 cooperating school districts between 1954 and 1960, the years in which the class of 1960, which formed the study population, traversed the six years of secondary education. Essentially, its aim was to discover techniques by which early school leaving might be reduced through a program of guidance services. Information was collected on all members of the class and forwarded to the Bureau, especially data on students who became dropouts. Bureau supervisors visited the districts twice each year to assist local personnel in the development of the project and to record promising practices. It should be noted that this large undertaking was accomplished solely through the usual Bureau facilities. No additional funds were made available either to the Bureau or to the schools.

Our findings in HPP can be summarized as follows:

More students can be held in school if counselors and staff members -

1. Attack the problem together;

2. Earnestly work to obtain the support and understanding of the parents of the potential dropouts;

3. Identify potential dropouts and begin to work with them long before their decision to leave is made. Early identification is possible through use of the Bureau developed rating scale for early school leaving (HPP Form II, Pupil Holding Power Data).

Before proceeding I think that you should understand our administration of the on-going projects (ABLE, STEP, Talent Search), for it reflects a fundamental point of view concerning the education of the socially disadvantaged. Districts desiring to participate submit proposals outlining the attack that they will mount on the problem with our assistance. These documents are reviewed by a Department committee on which are represented supervisors of guidance, psychology, elementary and secondary education, child development and other educational specialties from the several Bureaus in the Department. Those which have the most merit are approved, often following some revisions in keeping with the committee's comments. When the projects become operative, they are periodically visited by Bureau of Guidance supervisors and by other Department specialists who estimate their success and offer suggestions for their improvement.

The above is related to make clear this fundamental assumption: There are a number of valid approaches to the education of the socially disadvantaged. Presumably, a local solution, with the advice of the Department, should have more promise than one dictated by the Department, which must be less aware, relatively, of local resources and contingencies. Also, it may be well to point out that of the more than 2,000,000 children in school in New York State, only some 8000 are included in our projects. Thus, these special efforts have pertinence largely for demonstration purposes.

We have spoken briefly of our programs. What trends in service for the socially disadvantaged can be drawn from them? Because a trend must be described in relation to some base line, we have chosen to contrast the efforts of counselors of the socially disadvantaged with those of counselors for "white, middle class" youngsters, recalling this phrase in PROJECT BEACON's definition. We will develop these trends in terms of dimensions of difference. The dimensions we will employ are those of client-counselor initiative, counseling readiness and counselor-staff relations.

1. Client-counselor initiative

Here we are speaking of that which brings the counselor and his client together. An illustration from the Holding Power Project will illustrate our meaning. Seniors from high and low holding power schools were asked to indicate whether they usually saw the counselor at their request or at his. Significantly more of the seniors in the high holding power schools came of their own volition. Significantly more of the low holding power seniors awaited the counselor's call. From the same source two other findings are relevant. Significantly more of the parents of seniors in high holding power schools had been in recent contact with the counselor than had parents of seniors in low holding power schools. Also when asked if the counseling service had been sufficient to their needs, low holding power seniors were more satisfied than high holding power seniors. In other words the demand for counseling time was less adequately met in the high holding power schools.

Precisely this same phenomena can be observed in all of the projects, at least in their early stages. The socially disadvantaged do not freely approach the counselor. The counselor rather takes the initiative in offering his assistance to parents and students.

The trend then is this: suburban counselors do not lack demands for their attention. Often, in fact, they must employ considerable skill to manage the assault of students and parents. Counselors of the socially disadvantaged have the opposite problem. They must reach out to students and parents and often make home visits and establish evening office hours to promote a demand for their service. In addition, most of the projects provide group meetingsfor parents and invite them to perform as chaperones on project trips. Parenthetically, you may be interested to learn that a recent Bureau survey revealed that more than a third of all New York State counselors now have scheduled evening office hours for at least a portion of the school year.

The importance of efforts with parents cannot be minimized. In the Holding Power Project, the reason most frequently advanced by counselors for the decision of students to leave school before graduation was the attitude of parents. From other Holding Power data we learned that only one-third of the parents of dropouts were known to actively desire their children to remain in school; another third were indifferent, and the final third were opposed to their continued attendance. Yet, it was found in this project that only 20% of the parents of droupouts were contacted by school personnel to offer their help in keeping the students in school.

I recall vividly the comments of the counselors in a Talent Search project after some experience in an evening guidance program for families of disadvantaged students. They felt that only through this activity had they ever had the opportunity to deal at length with the problems these families face. They were quite humble as they described their growing insight into the burden carried by these parents. Adult members of these families do not often appear in school during regular school hours. In the evening, aware of the fact that the counselors are there just to see them, and less self-conscious in the relatively emptied school,

they have joined the counselors in what has become a learning experience for both.

Although it might be as appropriately left to the readiness dimension, this last point in the initiative dimension is offered. The counselor in many ways is a mediator between two cultures. The first purpose of his work must be to convince those whom he seeks to help, that the educational institution can indeed serve them, that it can make a difference for the better in their lives in rather specific terms. The disadvantaged are not naive. They know that for our familiar "white middle class", education does indeed represent a well traveled path to success. They may be aware of the opportunity denied even to some of the better educated who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. They must be convinced that the counselor is not merely offering another avenue to frustration. What can the counselor promise? Only that he and his colleagues believe that together, they and the family, can at least develop more alternatives than exist without the effort. The mention of alternatives leads us to our second dimension.

2. Counseling Readiness

All educators are familiar with the readiness concept. Briefly stated, attempts to develop a skill before the organism is prepared usually yield no significant gains in performance over those whose training is delayed until the appropriate level of maturation has occurred. Often in connection with reading readiness, we find schools providing a wide variety of experience for children before attempting to teach them to read to insure their familiarity with the objects and ideas that will be symbolized in their primers.

Counseling may be characterized as the creation of the climate for decision making. Counseling readiness then is that condition of readiness which recognizes alternative courses of action. Here we must admit that our orientation is a bit directive because what is meant is that the client appreciates as valid possi-

bilities, alternatives that the counselor may see far more clearly at the beginning of the counseling process than he (the client) does. To return for a moment to our description of the counselor as a cultural mediator, in suggesting alternatives, the counselor is really pointing to possible ways through the barriers surrounding the disadvantaged. However, before a significant decision can be made, the client must see these avenues as clearly as the counselor. He must recognize them as a "through street", not as a "dead end."

Just as young readers, and especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, must first become familiar with the concepts represented on the printed page, so too must disadvantaged students be sensitized to the opportunities which are open to their exploitation before they can decide, before they can be counseled, to pursue them.

Thus in the projects we find the counselors fulfilling an expanded role. To get their students ready to weigh the decisions their ability and our democracy evoke, disadvantaged students must be taken on "sight seeing tours" of the world in which we would interest them. Actually, trips and tours do seem to have the most profound impact of any project technique of a readiness nature. Here we are reminded of the Utica lad who, gazing across the countryside from an Adirondack height on a project trip said, "Now I know why people fight for this country." Also, the students in Buffalo who had never been across the Peace Bridge, and the Westchester boys who had never visited Manhattan. Perhaps these trips have almost their most important effect in convincing parents and students that, after all, the school does really feel that they are rather important. However, the trips are not without purpose and usually are to sites of cultural significance. Thrusts are made at the ghetto boundaries at the physical and the ideational levels.

The counselor also brings emissaries from the world outside to stimulate his

students. Frequently these represent the same minority groups as the students and all, of course, are successful in their chosen fields. Students see and talk with individuals who have made the decisions we suggest and pursued them to fruition. What better evidence can there be of the possibilities that the counselor is outlining. Recently in Niagara Falls I shared with a project counselor his delight in the positive influences radiating from a career conference he had just concluded at which these occupational representatives appeared, among others: bank clerk, sales clerk, apprentice draftsman, medical intern, armed forces captain, elementary and secondary school teachers. All were Negroes. Two school administrators present - the event was held on a school holiday - promptly invited the entire roster of speakers to appear at their own schools. Also of note, employers permitted the speakers to attend without loss of pay.

Finally, counselors encourage their teaching colleagues to provide experiences of all types - musical, art and academic - to contribute to the raising of aspirations. A Bureau colleague told me of visiting a project class in which students were raptly following a teacher as she displayed a collection of prints she had brought from her home.

What is the trend in the counseling readiness dimension? Suburban counselors encounter no difficulty in assuming that a majority of their students are well aware of the opportunities that accrue to continued education. The counselor of the disadvantaged can make no such assumption. He does expend considerable time and energy in making such opportunities psyschologically and physically visible to those he serves.

3. Counselor-Staff Relations

In the Holding Power Project we attempted to isolate specific and discreet techniques that could be shown to have a significant effect upon the reduction of

early school leaving. In this we were unsuccessful. However, we did establish that schools which improved their holding power the most, over the term of the project, combined the efforts of school staff members, including the counselor of course, significantly more often than was the case in schools which improved their retention rates the least. Our interpretation of this finding and others in the Holding Power Project concerning the role of the counselors included these points:

a. Certainly the counselor alone cannot be expected to be responsible for local reductions in early school leaving.

b. The problem of early school leaving is rooted in the attitudes of parents, students and staff toward the values of education. Therefore only when the staff members serving a particular potential dropout are united in their purpose of assisting the student, and others like him, are school efforts likely to be successful. Most educators, counselors perhaps more than others, have known the frustration of having their efforts to change the attitudes of a student unceremoniously emasculated by an unsympathetic colleague.

c. The proper role of the counselor then becomes that of a sensitizer-coordinator to his fellow staff members. He must first encourage them to accept their share of the responsibility for the general progress of each student. Next, because of his strategic position astride the communications network within the school which renders the pupil record information readily accessible to him, and which allows him relatively free contacts with parents, students, and staff members, he must discharge a liaison function vis-a-vis his colleagues.

The counselors in our current projects do tend to seek and achieve harmony of

action with their fellow staff members.

What of the trend in this dimension? It would be less than accurate to suggest that the typical middle class counselor performs as a specialist isolated from his colleagues. Nevertheless, there is some evidence of a movement in this direction, as witness the college placement specialist in many suburban high schools. Such counselors perform more as expediters with clients highly motivated to seek further education. Their principal activity is the matching of pupil credentials and college requirements. Because the credentials are largely determined by the time students come to them, contacts with fellow staff members to improve student performance are less pertinent and less pursued.

Perhaps more serious is the growing tendency in certain quarters of the profession to describe the counselor's proper role as that of a sheltered counseling psychologist. According to one scheme advanced at the APGA Convention in Boston, guidance services would be provided by a court of specialists in group guidance, educational and occupational information, placement and the like, who would hover like worker bees around the innermost cell of the hive where the queen bee, the counseling psychologist, would alone confer with individual students.

As we have pondered such developments, this thought has occurred to us. It may be that the counselor can effectively specialize in some facet of guidance when there is good evidence that the values of education embraced by his school and by the members of the community served by the school are in close agreement. When community and school aims diverge, the counselor's work is perforce to reduce this divergence by encouraging changes in attitude on the part both of students and parents on the one hand, and staff members on the other to reduce what could be termed, the "valve gap."

The counselor of the disadvantaged, then, studiously avoids any specialization

which threatens to diminish his communication with staff members.

There is also a fourth dimension which requires some discussion too. This fourth dimension is the "value gap" or "cultural lag" which distinguishes the value system of the school in which the counselor of the disadvantaged labors and the students and families with whom he works. The counselor initiates contacts with families and students, develops activities to ready counselees for decisions appropriate to their ability and the promise of our democratic society, and co-operates with colleagues - all to effect some congruence in the separated value systems. We hear much talk these days of dialogue between representatives of our major religious faiths. The counselor of the disadvantaged seeks to chair a dialogue between representatives of two cultures.

Before closing, I would like to comment briefly on three other aspects of counseling the disadvantaged as observed in our projects. Not infrequently, one reviews reports of instances in which counselors have discovered home situations so distressed that they have had to caution their colleagues against much progress with the children from such homes. Thus is epitomized a crucial dilemma. The school may adjust its program to compensate for individual differences of large magnitude, but in some instances it simply cannot alter extra-school circumstances which have the effect of negating much that it attempts for the disadvantaged. Earlier we spoke of the counselor as a cultural mediator. He also is a pioneer in that his work often brings him to the boundary between school and community responsibility - a line which he crosses at his peril. He can, however, awaken others to their proper duties which, if discharged, reduce the threat to the school program. To this end, several of our local projects have established lay advisory councils to acquaint the community-at-large with the need for the alleviation of problems which the school is powerless to attack.

It seems to be a part of educational folklore to identify new programs as fads. Educators are particularly delighted when they can point to a current venture attempted a generation ago and dropped. Unhappily, there may be some justification for their cynicism. Just now, projects for the socially disadvantaged are enjoying a great favor. I cannot believe that our work too will disappear in the predictable future from the educational scene, because there is too much evidence in our national life of a growing concern for those of our citizens who have shared less fully of our abundance. However, I am equally convinced that unique responsibilities for the education of the disadvantaged will ultimately persevere only because a large sector of the education profession accepts these new obligations. Until now, dedicated teachers and counselors have devised ingenious stratagems to assist the disadvantaged in largely indifferent communities. Our present advantages must be effectively consolidated with the gains they have made and fiercely guarded, lest we too become participants in a fad. It must be remembered that the disadvantaged can bring little pressure for added service. We must be their voices in a cause worthy of the loftiest of the aims of education.

A final point related to the above: We have had some worries concerning the fate of certain of the activities in our projects when state aid is withdrawn. Ostensibly, our programs allow districts to develop and evaluate procedures beyond their means otherwise, with the thought that the best of these will be permanently installed when financial aid ceases. To repeat an earlier statement, the projects are solely for demonstration purposes. More than we like, districts have been slow to abandon unprofitable undertakings and to adopt promising practices in unaided schools in their local systems. Herein lies the danger that we may in fact be only on a band wagon. The communities that we serve cannot be expected, eventaully, to pay for expensive extensions of responsibility whose worth cannot be practically demonstrated. Counselors and educators must constantly appraise and adjust their efforts to achieve and to deserve community appreciation and support.